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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 14 July 2010, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Errázuriz (Vice-President) ..... (Chile)

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Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance

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In the absence of Mr. Ali (Malaysia), Mr. Errázuriz (Chile), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (A/65/82-E/2010/88)

1. **The President**, opening the humanitarian affairs segment, said that the provision of humanitarian assistance was an increasingly complicated task. While humanitarian actors sought to provide life-saving assistance to communities affected by complex emergencies and natural disasters, the combined effect of global challenges such as climate change, extreme poverty and the food, economic and financial crises were generating new humanitarian needs in non-traditional contexts. The overall threat level and the number of deliberate attacks on aid organizations and their personnel, equipment and facilities had also risen significantly.

2. The humanitarian affairs segment, the theme of which was "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian assistance", offered an opportunity for Member States and the international humanitarian community to deliberate on how best to respond to both traditional and emerging crises and to reiterate their commitment to upholding the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence in the provision of humanitarian assistance. Member States, which had sovereign responsibility for their citizens' well-being, should, when faced with complex humanitarian emergencies that transcended national boundaries, be ready both to provide and to receive humanitarian assistance.

3. **Mr. Holmes** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/65/82-E/2010/88), said that, as predicted in previous years, demands for humanitarian assistance had increased as a result of chronic and increasingly acute vulnerability caused by global trends such as climate change, the food crisis and demographics, with profound consequences for humanitarian and development work. Humanitarian needs had continued to rise in 2010 as a result of armed conflict, natural disasters and global structural challenges; that had been reflected in a record initial consolidated appeals process request of $7.1 billion for 2010, which had risen to $9.5 billion following the mid-year review.

4. Natural disasters had contributed to an increase in humanitarian needs in both 2009 and 2010; in the first half of 2010, there had been massive earthquakes not only in Haiti but also in Chile and China. While both the Chilean and Chinese Governments had responded rapidly to their respective natural disasters by deploying relief and assessment teams, temporary shelter materials, food, medicine and water to the affected areas, with some assistance from the international community, the Haiti earthquake had necessitated one of the largest and most complex international relief operations in recent years. Six months later, it was still in full emergency mode.

5. Slower-onset disasters due to unpredictable and unprecedented weather patterns in many parts of the world were also having a very significant humanitarian impact. In the past year, for example, appeals had been launched for people affected by chronic drought-related vulnerability in Guatemala, Kenya and Niger, while Asia had faced major flooding crises as a result of successive cyclones. In the Horn of Africa, nearly 23 million people were severely affected by a drought that had lasted six years in some areas. The African Sahel was undergoing the most severe food and nutrition crisis in decades, with malnutrition rates well above emergency levels, owing to the cumulative effects of global trends, lack of reserves, exhausted coping mechanisms and rapidly growing populations. In many countries, the global financial and economic crisis, extreme poverty, resource scarcity, population growth, rapid urbanization and volatile energy prices threatened to create chronic acute vulnerability on a scale currently hard to imagine.

6. Most humanitarian needs, however, continued to arise from man-made disasters. Protracted conflicts in such countries as Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and the Sudan showed no signs of coming to an end, while the drawdown of some peacekeeping missions would pose further challenges for affected communities and humanitarian operations. New internal conflicts had also emerged, in Pakistan and Yemen, for example, with a severe impact on civilians. The total number of people who had been internally displaced by armed conflict was estimated at 27 million, of whom over 6 million had been newly displaced in 2009.

7. Humanitarian needs were therefore greater than ever. Even in some countries where the situation had improved, such as Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka, significant assistance would continue to be required in the immediate future. There were, however, a few countries, including East Timor, Nepal, Côte d'Ivoire and Uganda, where humanitarian needs had declined significantly, despite some ongoing fragility. The good news was that the humanitarian architecture established in recent years was enabling the international humanitarian community to cope with the increased needs; sectoral coordination had improved, partnerships were stronger, financing was quicker and more predictable, and leadership on the ground had become more effective. The generosity of donors had also improved, meaning that it was usually possible to fund the most urgent needs from the global humanitarian aid budget, although many needs remained unmet.

8. With humanitarian needs growing so fast, however, the traditional humanitarian toolbox would increasingly prove insufficient to address situations, particularly since long-running vulnerabilities caused by climate change and other global challenges were not signalled by any distinct trigger event. The humanitarian system would therefore need to be able to identify imminent humanitarian needs and to find ways to avert crises, rather than focusing solely on shock-driven, after-the-fact responses. That meant that the humanitarian system should help to reduce vulnerability and strengthen resilience through improved risk reduction and preparedness; improve modalities for monitoring and identifying acute humanitarian vulnerability and need; and strengthen partnerships with Governments, development institutions, civil society and other actors to engage in knowledge transfer and early analysis of potential implications, with more emphasis on common needs assessment. That would facilitate adaptation to contexts where entry and exit strategies were harder to define and help develop a better understanding of global and regional tipping points, which would ultimately result in more effective and timely responses to situations of increasing vulnerability.

9. Increasingly frequent and brutal attacks on humanitarian workers were constraining their ability to reach people in need; 2009 had been the deadliest year to date for such staff. The numbers of deliberate killings, kidnappings and attacks were particularly worrying in such countries as Somalia, Afghanistan and Pakistan, while Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan were also becoming increasingly dangerous. Frank and constructive debate on the issue was needed, since humanitarian workers in high-risk environments were entitled to look to Member States for understanding and support.

10. At the global level, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs had launched a study on operating in high-risk environments to learn from recent experiences and codify best practices, while in the field it was working with other actors to drive home the message that humanitarian assistance was genuinely neutral and independent, responded only to needs on the ground and did not reflect any kind of wider Western or Northern political or security agenda, but only universal values. In order to improve the effectiveness and safety of humanitarian operations and gain access to those in need, it was also important to be ready to engage in dialogue with armed groups; negotiating access must not be confused with political negotiations and certainly did not confer respectability or legitimacy on such groups. Although robust physical protection measures, such as armed escorts, might be necessary in particularly difficult contexts, increasing acceptance of humanitarian actors would be a more sustainable form of protection.

11. In many operating contexts, humanitarian access was also restricted by bureaucratic delays or impediments. Humanitarian workers and, ultimately, the beneficiaries of humanitarian assistance depended on the authorities of the affected States for cooperation in facilitating and expediting humanitarian aid. Parties to conflicts were obliged by international humanitarian law either to provide for affected populations under their control or to give humanitarian personnel full, timely and unimpeded access to people in need. Member States should actively counter propaganda aimed at creating the perception that foreigners and foreign organizations were following political agendas.

12. Despite the scale of the challenges, the international humanitarian community's efforts to ensure a coordinated, predictable and accountable humanitarian response capacity were yielding results, as demonstrated by the response to the Haiti earthquake. Although that humanitarian operation remained a huge challenge, in the final analysis much more had gone right than wrong. In particular, the cluster approach had proved its worth; without it,

getting the relief effort under way in crucial areas such as health, shelter and the provision of water would have been all the more difficult. At the same time, more cluster management capacity and better inter-cluster coordination would have helped to ensure better cohesion between the strategic and operational levels of the response operation. Furthermore, greater understanding of the socio-economic environment and improved communication and collaboration with local actors would have led to better-targeted assistance. Finally, more effective ways should be found to include major bilateral actors, military personnel and the private sector in humanitarian coordination mechanisms.

13. Consolidated appeals processes and flash appeals were being better prioritized and integrated, in order to help channel as much money as possible through the multilateral system, which was the best way to ensure that donations were effective. The Central Emergency Response Fund and local pooled funds, which made a real difference to response speed and flexibility, had also received strong support from the international community. Continued efforts were being made to improve the effectiveness and accountability of all funding mechanisms. In the year ahead, particular efforts would be made to bring together the related, but often separate, activities of needs assessment, joint planning, resource allocation, and monitoring and impact evaluation. As the humanitarian community moved towards better common, coordinated and harmonized assessments, particularly in the early stages of a crisis, the aim was to develop an agreed assessment tool that could be easily adapted in the field for use in emergencies. Such a tool would help to prioritize wider planning in the consolidated appeals process and flash appeals, and to orient the funding managed through the Central Emergency Response Fund and country-level pooled funds.

14. **Mr. Al-Shami** (Observer for Yemen), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the international community must redouble its efforts to address the increased humanitarian challenges resulting from complex emergencies and natural disasters, which had been compounded by the global economic and financial crisis, food insecurity, energy crises and climate change. The Group reiterated its commitment to the guiding principles for the provision of humanitarian assistance contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182 and emphasized the primary role of the affected State in initiating, organizing, coordinating and implementing such assistance. While the Group appreciated the role of the United Nations in coordinating humanitarian assistance, the efficiency and effectiveness of such coordination should be enhanced. The international community should also support the efforts of developing countries to build humanitarian capacity and Member States should strengthen their efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to civilians in occupied territories, in accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law, especially the Fourth Geneva Convention.

15. Financing mechanisms for humanitarian assistance must be strengthened in order to ensure adequate, timely and predictable funding for complex emergencies and natural disasters. The Group looked forward to the adoption by consensus of a draft resolution on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

16. **Mr. Grauls** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the European Union welcomed the report of the Secretary-General (A/65/82-E/2010/88) and reiterated its support for the work of the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

17. The year had been marked by many achievements in the provision of humanitarian aid. The European Union was particularly heartened by the scale of the global humanitarian response to the earthquake in Haiti and by the continued contributions to the Central Emergency Response Fund despite the global economic downturn. It also welcomed the appointment of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the progress made in implementing humanitarian reform. However, despite those positive developments, major challenges remained in a number of areas. For example, access to beneficiaries had become more difficult in a growing number of countries; the security situation had deteriorated for both beneficiaries and aid workers; and more efforts were still needed in the area of disaster

risk reduction. The lessons learned from the Haiti earthquake showed that linking short-term humanitarian aid to long-term development cooperation activities remained a challenge.

18. In order to respond to complex humanitarian challenges, the humanitarian system needed to be flexible, efficient, predictable and coordinated. In that regard, the strengthened role of humanitarian coordinators, the use of pooled funds, partnerships and the cluster approach had all been proven to mutually enhance effectiveness. While a recent evaluation had shown the cluster approach to be a valuable mechanism in a number of respects, that approach could not reach its full potential without further enhancements. All humanitarian actors should implement the recommendations of that evaluation; in particular, clusters should be more closely linked to national actors, other coordination mechanisms and long-term development projects in order to strengthen timeliness, preparedness and links with development and to support the sustainability of humanitarian relief operations. Fuller use should be made of local capacities, especially in the case of operational clusters, to ensure that cluster coordination was operationally relevant and fitted local circumstances.

19. The European Union supported continued efforts to develop a framework for common needs assessments as a way to optimize resource allocation. While the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs had a central role to play in that regard, the European Union strongly encouraged all humanitarian stakeholders, in particular the funds and programmes, to cooperate in that task.

20. The United Nations should further strengthen its ability to recruit and deploy experienced and competent staff quickly and flexibly and to procure emergency relief material rapidly and cost-effectively in order to support the coordination of international humanitarian assistance. The European Union welcomed the results achieved by country-level common humanitarian funds and emergency response funds and by the Central Emergency Response Fund, and supported efforts to further develop the consolidated appeals process as a strategic planning and fund-raising tool.

21. Gravely concerned at the continuation of long-standing conflicts, the outbreak of new complex emergencies and the continued displacement of millions of people, the European Union urged all States and other parties to facilitate the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian personnel and supplies to affected communities, in accordance with international humanitarian law. Since peacekeeping missions often played an important role in supporting the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance, the drawdown of such missions should be assessed in terms of its impact on humanitarian operations.

22. The European Union was concerned about the continued increase in the number of internally displaced persons, who often lacked any international protection. It therefore welcomed the adoption of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa and urged the States members of the African Union to ratify it. All States should provide durable solutions for internally displaced persons, in accordance with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

23. The European Union strongly condemned deliberate attacks on aid organizations and their personnel and reiterated its urgent call to Governments to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian personnel working in their territories. The United Nations and its partners should pursue initiatives to promote support for humanitarian action and acceptance of humanitarian actors.

24. Given the greater frequency and intensity of natural disasters in recent years, preparedness, prevention and response capacity needed to be strengthened in countries prone to such disasters. Disaster risk reduction and increased resilience were also vital for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The Action Plan implementing the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and the European Union strategy for supporting disaster risk reduction in developing countries reflected the high priority accorded by the European Union to that issue. The international humanitarian system must also stand ready to provide an effective and timely response to the increasing vulnerability arising from such global challenges as chronic poverty, environmental degradation, high population growth, climate change and global food trends, including by developing clear indicators and effective trigger mechanisms; that objective went beyond the scope of humanitarian aid and required a strong partnership between humanitarian and development actors. The whole United Nations system should continue to improve

cross-sectoral capacity to analyse global trends and their impact on vulnerability.

25. **Mr. McNee** (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, said that the breadth of issues to which the humanitarian system had been required to respond over the previous 12 months underscored the need for a strong, well-coordinated and flexible humanitarian system. The safety and security of humanitarian actors, which was critical for ensuring that humanitarian assistance reached those in need, remained tenuous in many contexts. The three delegations therefore supported the efforts of the Department of Safety and Security to implement new security mechanisms for identifying, analysing and mapping risks and threats with greater flexibility and responsiveness. Continued work by United Nations agencies to assess and upgrade their security measures was to be encouraged; the three delegations also strongly supported the "Saving Lives Together" initiative, developed by the United Nations in partnership with the NGO community.

26. Advocacy played a critical role in bolstering security. A clear communication strategy led by the Emergency Relief Coordinator in a crisis was vital for conveying relief strategies and approaches to the affected population, in order to avoid the risk of confusion and even alienation among stakeholders. Member States must be advocates for the humanitarian system, working within and strengthening the existing humanitarian framework, as well as informing domestic audiences of the most appropriate means of helping affected populations.

27. The three delegations supported the development by the humanitarian community of a clearer strategy for responding to situations of chronic and acute vulnerability. The need for a shift from a "shock-driven" to a more needs-based and vulnerability-led response required a redoubling of efforts in such areas as risk reduction and preparedness, strengthened governance and enhanced partnerships with a range of actors, including development actors. Information-sharing and the development of common tools and agreed indicators for needs assessments were critical for a more effective and equitable allocation of resources. Effective monitoring systems were also required.

28. Since strong leadership on the ground was vital, the commendable efforts of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to identify, recruit and train suitable individuals to serve in that capacity should be continued. Humanitarian and resident coordinators should not be overstretched by a multitude of functions and should be supported by well-staffed offices at all levels. Coordination was pivotal but often posed major challenges, particularly in the area of cluster coordination. Clusters must be able to establish themselves quickly; prioritize resources; communicate methodologies, responsibilities and purpose; and determine the division of labour among organizations. They should also be able to operate in coordination with other clusters, national coordination structures and NGOs.

29. Despite the challenges of sudden-onset crises, in which designated cluster leads might not already have a presence on the ground, agencies must ensure that, when individuals were deployed in that capacity, clear expectations and criteria for involvement were established and followed. Member States should not cause fragmentation within the system by acting in an ad hoc fashion but should continue to strengthen existing coordination mechanisms, which meant working in accordance with the principles of good humanitarian donorship.

30. The culture of learning and evaluation that had developed within humanitarian agencies in recent years must become common practice in a rapidly changing environment. Humanitarian agencies should be encouraged to demonstrate clearly the impact of their work. In that regard, the three delegations welcomed the phase two evaluation of the cluster approach and urged reflection and action on identified recommendations. They looked forward to receiving the results of the inter-agency real-time evaluation in Haiti and the five-year evaluations of the Central Emergency Response Fund.

31. **Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) said that the Secretary-General's report (A/65/82-E/2010/88) provided a good basis for discussions on the humanitarian agenda. In view of the impact of multiple crises and of long-term challenges such as migration, rapid urbanization, population growth, climate change, terrorism and scarce resources, humanitarian assistance should be seen as a permanent response to chronic humanitarian needs. In the context of global challenges, the international community's commitment to the guiding principles for the provision of

humanitarian assistance contained in General Assembly resolution 46/182 was of particular importance.

32. Access to affected communities was vital. To ensure the security of their personnel, humanitarian organizations should refrain from any activities that might be misunderstood by local communities and engage in proactive advocacy with regard to the humanitarian nature of their work. They should also cooperate constructively with recipient Governments, which were the main actors responsible for the provision, organization and coordination of humanitarian assistance to populations in need.

33. His delegation supported further improvements to the mechanisms for common needs assessment and mobilization of financial resources for United Nations humanitarian activities. The consolidated appeals process should continue to be a key mechanism for mobilizing voluntary contributions. The Secretariat should continue monitoring the effectiveness of the cluster approach and avoid a "one size fits all" approach, since humanitarian needs varied from one emergency to another.

34. While the use of military resources had become an important factor in the Organization's humanitarian response efforts, the use of military contingents should be a last resort and should not undermine the principle of independence, with civilian actors remaining responsible for general coordination. In that connection, the coordination capacity of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, which had continued to perform effectively despite its difficult financial situation, should be strengthened.

35. **Mr. Sial** (Pakistan) said that natural disasters aggravated by climate change affected more people in the world than humanitarian emergencies caused by conflicts and the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance as a result of natural disasters would continue to increase. Furthermore, the humanitarian challenges faced by the world had been compounded by the ongoing financial, energy and food crises, as noted in the Secretary-General's report. However, the identification of those challenges seemed to reflect an interest in expanding the mandate of humanitarian operations. Although it was important to move from relief work to long-term rehabilitation, that should not become the main theme of humanitarian assistance, which must remain streamlined, effective and accountable.

36. Improved coordination by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs remained pivotal in the provision of humanitarian assistance and in raising global awareness of the situation on the ground. Humanitarian relief work should not become politicized and should be sensitive to local circumstances. In order to reduce costs in humanitarian assistance operations, greater use needed to be made of local resources and personnel. Ongoing efforts, including accountability measures, were required in order to build trust between donors, international humanitarian actors and affected States. Capacity-building in those States that were most likely to be affected by humanitarian emergencies remained crucial. Reporting mechanisms should be fact-based.

37. Pakistan condemned the increasing number of attacks against humanitarian workers. While Member States should continue to take all possible steps to ensure their safety and security, the United Nations system should also provide them with the necessary training and capacity-building, including through enhanced coordination with host Governments, so that they remained aware of their environment.

38. Recently Pakistan had suffered from a number of humanitarian disasters but had also gained valuable experience in coping with such situations. A decentralized mechanism for preparedness and management had proved to be effective. In north-western parts of Pakistan, the Government, with the support of the United Nations, had effectively addressed the challenges posed by population displacement. Pakistan called upon the international community to assist its Government in promoting long-term development and the creation of economic opportunities in affected areas.

39. Pakistan continued to host over 2.5 million Afghan refugees, who put great pressure on Pakistan's socio-economic infrastructure, particularly since the material assistance provided for those refugees by the international community was declining.

40. All coordination of humanitarian assistance must respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States, as established in General Assembly resolution 46/182.

41. **Mr. Sumi** (Japan) said that the major natural disasters that had recently occurred around the world had clearly demonstrated that the coordination function of the United Nations needed to be strengthened and

that the United Nations system required ongoing reform. The Haitian earthquake had shown that the cluster approach did not work as effectively as had been anticipated. Security also needed to be enhanced for operations in States that were unable to maintain security. There needed to be effective coordination between military and civilian actors and a smooth transition from emergency relief to development. In particular it was essential to strengthen the coordination capacity of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, which should take the lead in organizing discussions among donors, NGOs and other stakeholders on improving the response to humanitarian emergencies.

42. Although disaster response was important, disaster preparedness and risk reduction were also vital. Member States should implement the Hyogo Framework for Action as soon as possible. Disaster management policies should be drawn up and exercises carried out regularly to ensure that such policies could be implemented. In that connection, Japan had established "disaster drill days" to raise awareness of the importance of preparedness. Japan was also striving to enhance cooperation within the Asian region and would be convening an international conference on disaster management in August 2010. In September 2010 it would host the inaugural International Search and Rescue Advisory Group Global Meeting, together with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

43. It was imperative to ensure that humanitarian personnel working in high-risk environments were not deliberately targeted or kidnapped. States were responsible for ensuring security within their own borders and strict compliance with international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law was indispensable. It was important to prevent violence against civilians by non-State armed groups and to combat their efforts to hinder humanitarian activities. Merely calling upon such groups to comply with humanitarian law was not effective. It was therefore necessary to promote a political process involving all stakeholders, including non-State groups, with a view to reaching ceasefires, concluding peace agreements and establishing the rule of law.

44. In order to ensure humanitarian access, humanitarian activities needed to be governed by the principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence. Long-term confidence-building measures among the local population were also necessary and local communities must be kept informed about humanitarian activities being conducted. Moreover, the root causes of conflict, including problems faced by minorities and access to natural resources, food and water, needed to be addressed.

45. In 2010 Japan would double its funding to the Central Emergency Response Fund, which was to be commended for its efforts to facilitate the initial response of United Nations agencies in humanitarian crises and to strengthen the humanitarian response in underfunded crises. Japan also commended the awareness- and fund-raising activities of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

46. **Ms. Wang** Hongbo (China) said that in a world of multiple economic, environmental, climate and food security challenges, demand for humanitarian assistance remained high. The growing number of non-State humanitarian actors, as well as financing, coordination and security challenges had made such operations increasingly complex. All parties involved in humanitarian assistance must respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the leadership of recipient countries. Humanitarian workers must observe the highest standards of conduct and discipline.

47. Developing countries had long had limited capacity to deliver humanitarian relief and engage in disaster risk reduction and preparedness, and even to afford unimpeded access to disaster areas. The United Nations system should transfer technology and expertise to developing countries in order to build their capacities and promote synergies among international, regional and national humanitarian activities.

48. As it had become more difficult to fund humanitarian operations, the United Nations system should enhance accountability and transparency, improve financing for low-visibility humanitarian programmes, strive to secure adequate, stable and predictable resources and reduce over-reliance on only a few donors.

49. China had an enormous need for disaster relief and must constantly engage in disaster prevention, disaster reduction and emergency relief efforts. Therefore, it attached great importance to humanitarian cooperation and would continue to support United Nations and other international activities in that field.

50. **Mr. Christian** (Ghana) said that humanitarian assistance encompassed difficult tasks such as protecting refugees and internally displaced persons, securing humanitarian aid and restoring civil order. Despite resource constraints and sometimes in the face of violent and deliberate attacks, the United Nations and its agencies played an important role in humanitarian crises around the world. Although there had been criticism of slow responses, the United Nations had worked to improve operational capacities and to respond more effectively and swiftly to emergencies.

51. In order to achieve improved coordination, there must be improved preparedness; stronger leadership in the field; needs assessments to improve the effectiveness of aid delivery; effective partnerships between humanitarian agencies and national and local governments; and response preparedness at different levels.

52. Since it was better to prevent than to cure, national and local disaster response capacities should be strengthened through advisory services, training, knowledge exchange and networking. National humanitarian systems' top-down approaches should be reviewed and decentralized to make local humanitarian actors more effective.

53. Humanitarian actors should promote their mandates, deepen their analysis of conflict dynamics, assess security risks and share security information. Host Governments must protect humanitarian workers through, inter alia, greater investments in security.

54. **Ms. Dunlop** (Brazil) said that lessons must be learned from the tragic natural disasters of 2010. Global crises had increased countries' vulnerabilities and reduced their response capacities, requiring greater international cooperation to reduce impacts.

55. In Haiti, despite the slow fulfilment of financial pledges, the international community had responded well to post-earthquake needs for water, sanitation, shelter and medical services. However, the limitations of current mechanisms had become clear and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's conclusions regarding the international response to the disaster in Haiti would serve as the basis for improved future coordination.

56. National ownership of humanitarian efforts was important for ensuring that the principle of non-interference was respected. Assistance provided by different actors should be mutually supportive so that populations in need would receive the intended benefits. Parties to armed conflicts must comply with international humanitarian law and guarantee the safety and security of humanitarian operations and personnel.

57. For Brazil, humanitarian assistance was closely tied to sustainable development. The food aid it provided combined emergency relief with structural policies aimed at promoting development, particularly by stimulating the economy through local procurement. Education was a powerful tool for disaster prevention and response, and Brazil supported the World Bank's "safe schools" programme. Humanitarian actors should take the special needs of vulnerable populations into account in emergency situations and should step up efforts to combat violence against women.

58. Convinced of the leadership role the United Nations must play in humanitarian efforts, Brazil had increased its contributions to the Central Emergency Response Fund and had given priority to channelling its humanitarian assistance through United Nations entities, in line with the needs defined by the affected State. The capacities of national and local actors, which were best placed to respond quickly to emergencies, should be strengthened. Further work was also needed on preparedness and disaster risk reduction. Lastly, Brazil welcomed the strengthening of South American arrangements for the provision of humanitarian assistance.

59. **Ms. Shaban** (Observer for Kenya) said that climate change, rapid population growth, high food prices and disease made Kenya vulnerable to disasters. Its dependence on rain-fed agriculture, livestock and tourism put it at risk owing to the increased frequency and intensity of unpredictable weather patterns. Because of crop failures, loss of livestock and the lack of basic necessities, millions of Kenyans had received emergency relief and food aid in recent years. The Government of Kenya, supported by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, had built and enhanced its capacity to address humanitarian challenges. It had an early warning system and stores of food and non-food items to cope with the effects of floods and drought. A multisectoral approach allowed stakeholders to address issues of food security; those issues, together with the protection of livelihoods, were taken into account in climate adaptation and risk management strategies. The Government was reclaiming water catchment areas, carrying out large-

scale reforestation projects and allocating funds to agricultural areas.

60. The country had learned valuable lessons from the displacement of almost a million people owing to, inter alia, the post-election violence in 2007. Accordingly, she stressed the importance of better coordination, early warning systems, pre-disaster preparedness, stronger response mechanisms and a broader donor base. Kenya had implemented a broad range of institutional mechanisms and policy frameworks to prevent a recurrence of election-related violence, including steps to investigate the 2007 events and to promote peace and reconciliation among the country's communities.

61. **Mr. Hassen** (Observer for Ethiopia) said that humanitarian needs had increased as a result of armed conflict, natural disasters, climate change, global crises and food insecurity. The huge rise in the number of internally displaced persons and refugees had stretched what humanitarian assistance was available, and developing countries had limited capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies.

62. He fully concurred with the Secretary-General that the humanitarian system should shift from a shock-driven to a needs-based response. National disaster management plans and better management capacities could improve responses and reduce damage through prevention and preparedness efforts. The overall leadership of humanitarian operations should be the responsibility of the State concerned.

63. In view of the recurrent threat of drought, the Government of Ethiopia had established preparedness and prevention mechanisms that included an early warning system and an emergency food reserve. A food security programme had been implemented to address both chronic and transitory shortages and the Government had adopted a risk management approach that involved development work to address the underlying causes of risks and vulnerabilities, stronger response preparedness capacities through contingent financing and stockpile maintenance and effective disaster management programmes.

64. Paragraph 9 of the Secretary-General's report (A/65/82-E/2010/88) inaccurately stated that there were localized access restrictions for humanitarian organizations in Ethiopia, as well as internal displacement and community-level conflict. In fact, the Government had been making every effort to facilitate humanitarian operations across the country. The special proactive arrangement in the Somali region, where access to assistance had been improved through a "hubs and spokes" aid distribution system, had achieved very positive results. Regarding the reference to community-level conflict, the Government of Ethiopia wished to clarify that movements of traditional pastoral peoples in search of food and water must not be construed as conflicts over administrative boundaries. In addition, although food prices remained high, staples and grains had come down in price.

65. In conclusion, he called for increased contributions to funding mechanisms for emergencies and natural disasters so as to ensure predictable, timely and needs-based access to resources and effective responses to global humanitarian challenges.

66. **Mr. Frisch** (Observer for Switzerland) said that it was crucial that humanitarian access should be guaranteed so that aid and protection could be provided to civilians. The issue was growing in complexity due to the increase in the numbers of parties to conflicts, including non-State armed groups. States had the primary responsibility for protecting and assisting their own citizens, and in that context humanitarian actors must be granted rapid, full and unimpeded access to victims. It was important to reduce the security risks facing humanitarian actors albeit without compromising the principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence.

67. The danger of environmental emergencies was often underestimated and required expertise beyond the capacities of the individual countries concerned. More attention should be paid to preparedness for such emergencies and to disaster risk reduction efforts. As part of its preparations for the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Switzerland would continue working to increase awareness of such issues.

68. The integrity of humanitarian aid depended on the professionalism of the actors, as reflected in respect for humanitarian principles, efficient strategic and operational coordination and quality of services provided. As recently seen in Haiti, the proliferation of non-professional humanitarian actors in the context of rapid response created coordination problems and additional burdens for the countries concerned. The Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit therefore planned to continue efforts to further develop professional

standards through a certification process. It was the joint responsibility of donor and recipient countries to ensure that the actors involved were professionals. Switzerland therefore appealed to States to reflect on that question and develop a common approach.

69. **Mr. Gálvez** (Chile) said that States had the primary responsibility for providing humanitarian assistance to their people in the event of complex emergencies or natural disasters, taking into consideration the special needs of more vulnerable groups, including women and children. Nonetheless, some situations required the support of the international community due to their frequency and magnitude and the institutional limitations of the country concerned. Such support must be based on the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

70. Owing to its capacity, experience, legitimacy and field presence, the United Nations had a leading role to play in supporting national relief efforts. Regional and subregional organizations, which had in-depth knowledge of local circumstances, also had a major role to play in that regard. One of the challenges of humanitarian assistance was ensuring that international efforts were properly aligned with those of local civil-society organizations and the private sector. Very often, civil-society organizations were the first responders in emergencies and were also the last ones on the ground once the situation had stabilized. Similarly, the private sector could contribute immensely by mobilizing economic resources, providing relevant services and materials and, in times of reconstruction, creating jobs and revitalizing the economy.

71. The international community's efforts should not be limited to providing humanitarian relief following a disaster, but should also be geared towards capacity-building, rehabilitation and recovery in affected communities.

72. **Mr. Cancela** (Uruguay) said that all States should take the necessary steps to prevent attacks on humanitarian personnel. It was regrettable that the reports of the Secretary-General continued to call on States to provide full and timely access to affected areas, as the work of humanitarian actors continued to be impeded, even though such access was required under international humanitarian law.

73. Increased efforts should be made to combat violence and sexual exploitation during humanitarian crises and to rehabilitate victims of such violence. As humanitarian assistance was essentially civilian in nature, State actions should be coordinated with those of civil society in responding to humanitarian emergencies. It was necessary to tackle the multiple factors that gave rise to humanitarian emergencies, including climate change and the food crisis. Any humanitarian response must be sustainable and must take the development context into account.

74. While States had the primary responsibility for humanitarian assistance, the need for international cooperation was widely recognized. The international community should address the economic and social impact of humanitarian emergencies in affected countries, many of which also suffered from extreme poverty. His delegation hoped that, in his next report, the Secretary-General would no longer find it necessary to urge States to facilitate the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian personnel and supplies to affected communities.

75. **Mr. Benítez Versón** (Observer for Cuba) said that many of the natural disasters generating humanitarian emergencies in the world were a direct consequence of climate change and ecological imbalance and that the world continued to face conflict situations and the global food, economic and financial crises. Humanitarian assistance must be delivered in a manner consistent with the principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality. States in need must request and agree to receive humanitarian assistance, and any manipulation of emergency situations and humanitarian assistance was unjustifiable and unacceptable and ran counter to the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

76. His country had suffered considerable damage in recent years as a result of major hurricanes, heavy rains and drought, but had been able to cope thanks to the active participation of State agencies and the population as a whole. The lessons learned from those disasters had helped the country to strengthen its regulatory, legislative and institutional frameworks for disaster risk reduction. The United Nations system and the international community had an important role to play in helping developing countries to improve their capacity to deal with humanitarian emergencies. Cuba would continue to help other countries affected by humanitarian emergencies, and would do so in a disinterested manner and in a spirit of solidarity.

77. **Mr. Kim** Soo Gwon (Republic of Korea) said that humanitarian needs continued to arise due to natural disasters, armed conflict, the financial, food and energy crises and climate change, among other causes. Humanitarian crises aggravated the hardship of the most vulnerable and undermined progress towards development goals. Earlier in 2010, events in the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti and other disasters had demonstrated the importance of coordinated action, as Member States and other actors had joined forces to relieve suffering and deliver emergency humanitarian assistance. Civil society and the private sector had played a major role in providing timely relief in Haiti, rapidly delivering life-saving assistance and mobilizing resources. A mechanism should be put in place to include such non-traditional actors as key United Nations partners.

78. The cluster approach was effective in addressing humanitarian needs at the field level when aligned with national policies. Inter-cluster coordination should be further improved. The Global Humanitarian Platform was another valuable mechanism that forged partnership among humanitarian actors. It could be further strengthened through the engagement of more development-oriented organizations, as well as the private sector.

79. Strengthening the humanitarian coordinator system was important. Under the strengthened leadership of the humanitarian architecture, responses would be more effective and better accountability mechanisms would be established. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee should work to recruit highly qualified individuals for the humanitarian coordination pool.

80. Safe, unimpeded and timely humanitarian access to vulnerable populations must be ensured in hazardous environments. Humanitarian actors should be accepted by all States and other parties, and their field operations should not be threatened. The United Nations should engage States and other parties to conflicts to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian personnel.

81. The humanitarian community should strive to deliver equitable responses to all kinds of crises. Through improved monitoring and reporting and better allocation of attention, crises could be prevented from worsening. His Government shared the view that a needs-based and vulnerability-led response was needed.

82. The Republic of Korea had contributed to the Central Emergency Response Fund and the consolidated appeals process, and would continue to do so. The United Nations system should evaluate the practical impact of pooled humanitarian funds and communicate its findings to Governments and humanitarian and development actors. His Government welcomed the launch of the comprehensive five-year evaluation of the Central Emergency Response Fund and would appreciate further information on the results achieved through the consolidated appeals process, by country and sector.

83. **Ms. Eckey** (Norway) said that operating in high-risk environments was a challenge for humanitarian actors. The work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to examine arrangements that had enabled humanitarian agencies to continue operating in such environments was appreciated. It was vital to ensure the engagement and support of senior management on security issues and to train personnel in soft skills such as cultural awareness and sensitivity to community perceptions.

84. Rural communities and sprawling informal urban settlements were particularly vulnerable in natural disasters. There should be a focus on prevention, preparedness and adaptation of policies and measures. Norway had prepared a white paper on prevention, preparedness and adaptation in developing countries, with concrete follow-up in China, Bangladesh, Viet Nam and Cuba. Those countries were vulnerable to extreme weather events and had useful experience that could be shared with other countries. Norway facilitated capacity-building measures in national and local institutions, supported data-sharing and promoted cooperation.

85. Men, boys, women and girls were affected differently by crises. The prevention of sexual abuse and gender-based violence against women and girls during crises was a key humanitarian issue. Gender advisers and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's gender marker tool were steps that should help to improve the implementation of gender-sensitive initiatives on the ground.

86. Despite the economic downturn, the United Nations humanitarian financing system had continued to grow. For example, contributions to the consolidated

appeals process had nearly doubled in the last two years. Norway would continue to fund selected humanitarian agencies through framework grants disbursed early in the year. Effective humanitarian response depended on efficient coordination. That would be a priority for Norway within the Donor Support Group of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.